



State of California

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 4, 2005

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**Commission set up to develop training standards
for correctional peace officers is failing its mission**

The Office of the Inspector General — the watchdog for California’s correctional system — said today that a commission created seven years ago to develop training standards for the state’s correctional peace officers has made minimal progress in that effort and is afflicted with “institutional paralysis” that prevents it from getting its work done.

Releasing the results of a three-month review of the Commission on Correctional Peace Officer Standards and Training, known as C-POST, Inspector General Matthew Cate reported that the commission has developed training standards for only seven of the 27 correctional peace officer classifications for which it is responsible and that it has yet to approve any of the standards developed so far.

“At the current pace, it could take the commission 20 years to finish developing the standards,” said Cate. “That’s obviously unacceptable. These standards are vital to making sure the training received by the state’s correctional peace officers for this difficult profession is up to date and fully covers recent developments in law and technology.”

Meanwhile, a correctional peace officer apprenticeship program for which the commission is responsible lacks key components and is threatened with decertification by the Department of Industrial Relations for non-compliance with state and federal standards, said Cate. The special

review determined that the apprenticeship program, which is intended to provide entry-level correctional peace officers with on-the-job training as well as classroom instruction, has been out of compliance for three years. The program's deficiencies include not having a local education agency to review training materials and the lack of an evaluation process to ensure that apprenticeship sponsors comply with program standards.

The Office of the Inspector General found that the commission has been hampered by a number of factors, including budget cutbacks and a lack of personnel and resources inside the state's correctional departments to aid in developing training standards. Beyond those problems, said Cate, the commission has been stymied by a persistent stalemate on the executive board between management and labor.

The stalemate is not surprising, said Cate, because under the law that established the commission, its executive board must be made up of equal numbers of labor and management commissioners— three representing management and three representing labor. The result is tie votes on almost every major issue, split evenly along labor and management lines. Between January 2002 and July 2003, for example, every single roll call vote resulted in a tie. The tie votes prevent the commission from acting on important agenda items.

At present the commission's work is at a standstill because labor commissioners have refused to attend meetings until a vacancy that left them with only two votes is filled. Without labor commissioners in attendance, the executive board lacks a quorum to conduct business and has therefore stopped meeting. The last meeting of the board took place in June 2004.

The report notes that the administration has proposed eliminating the commission and shifting its funding and functions to a new entity as part of the governor's correctional reorganization plan. The Legislature recently approved the reorganization plan and it will soon be sent to the governor for signature.

"In its current condition the commission is broken," said Cate. "Whether the commission is abolished or not, change is needed so that the commission or its replacement can move ahead with developing the necessary training standards for the state's correctional peace officers. It is crucial that adequate personnel and resources be dedicated to this important purpose."

The full text of the Inspector General's Special Review of the Commission on Correctional Peace Officers Standards and Training can be viewed and downloaded from the Office of the Inspector General's web site at <http://www.oig.ca.gov/>. To view the report on the web site, click on the report title, "Special Review of the Commission on Correctional Peace Officers Standards and Training," on the home page or on the link titled "Reports."

The Office of the Inspector General is an independent state agency responsible for oversight of the California correctional system, including the Commission on Correctional Peace Officers Standards and Training. The office carries out its mission by auditing and investigating correctional organizations under the Youth and Adult Correctional Agency to uncover criminal conduct, administrative wrongdoing, poor management practices, waste, fraud, and other abuses by staff, supervisors, and management. The special review of the Commission on Correctional Peace Officers Standards and Training was conducted under the authority provided to the Inspector General by Penal Code section 6126.

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